

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

JAFFA

Jaffa is an ancient coastal city located right next to modern Tel Aviv. For thousands of years, Jaffa's port was an important connection point between Europe, Asia, and Africa. The city is mentioned in the book of Jonah when the prophet tries to run away "from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). Jonah went to Joppa and boarded a ship headed for Tarshish. Today, Jaffa even has a whale statue to remind visitors of this famous story.

Joppa was also the port where wood from Lebanon was brought to King Solomon to build the First Temple (2 Chronicles 2:16). Later, the materials for the Second Temple were also delivered to Joppa (Ezra 3:7). In New Testament times, a disciple named Tabitha (also called Dorcas), who was known for helping others, lived there. When she died, Peter came to her home, prayed, and God brought her back to life. Peter also had his important vision of a sheet full of animals while he was staying in Joppa, "by the sea," which prepared him to share the gospel with the Gentiles.

Throughout history, many groups and empires controlled Jaffa. In more recent centuries, the Ottoman Empire had a major influence on Jaffa. The Ottomans rebuilt the city walls and improved the port. During the 1800s, Jaffa became famous around the world when Arab farmers developed Jaffa Oranges.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jewish people began returning to the Land of Israel, and many arrived through Jaffa's port. New Jewish immigrants built a neighborhood nearby, which eventually grew into Israel's second-largest city, Tel Aviv. In 1950, Jaffa officially became part of Tel Aviv, and the city is now known as Tel Aviv-Yafo.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:

In the Bible, Dorcas (also called Tabitha) was known for her kindness and good works in Joppa. She made clothing, helped the poor and widows, and encouraged the people around her. In this activity, students will follow her example by writing short letters or notes of encouragement to someone who may need support, kindness, or a reminder that they matter.

Resources Needed:

- Small cards, paper, or decorative note sheets
- Pens, markers, or colored pencils
- Optional: stickers or envelopes
- Optional: a basket or box labeled 'Jaffa Letters' for collecting them

Instructions:

- Introduce the story of Dorcas (also called Tabitha), someone known for helping others and showing kindness in Joppa.
 - Read Acts 9:36-43.
- **Students will consider who in their community could use encouragement.**
 - A friend
 - A teacher
 - A family member
 - Someone who is sick or struggling
 - Someone who serves the community (nurse, firefighter, custodian, etc.)
- **Students will write a short, kind, and uplifting letter to the person of their choice.**
 - "I appreciate you because..."
 - "You make a difference by..."
 - "I'm praying for you today."
 - "You matter."
- **Students can:**
 - Put letters into the "Jaffa Letters" basket for students to take and deliver later.
 - Deliver the letters themselves before they leave class.
 - (Optional) Read one encouraging message aloud—no names needed.